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ABSTRACT

A 1987 meeting in Fuji that examined the supply, training, and professional support of educational personnel in multi-island situations led to development of a directory of innovative practices relevant to any situation of isolation. Questionnaires were sent to a sample of countries in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean, and South Pacific. Findings are presented in the following areas: (1) policies that make staff feel part of the national network by providing equal opportunities for training and promotion; (2) selection criteria and procedures for teachers, administrators, and other personnel; (3) incentives such as free housing, transportation and hardship allowances for those in remote areas, and living conditions equal to those on the main island; (4) preservice programs providing orientation for those going to outer islands, practice teaching in the outer islands, and tailor-made courses for administrators; (5) inservice programs that support professional development of isolated administrators and provide courses designed for those unable to study full-time; (6) professional support that encourages cooperation, not confrontation (prompt courteous replies to letters and calls, sending supplies on time, visits by central office people to outer islands, equal professional support for all staff wherever they are); and (7) institutional initiatives that provide cooperative services and resource coordination through extension services and distance education programs. Two case studies and a list of questions provide a basis for thinking about the problems of isolation and for developing team effectiveness. Contains 27 references. (TD)

ED 389 490

Educational Development in the Small States of the Commonwealth

Lifelines for the Isolated

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John Weeks

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Lifelines for the Isolated

The Supply, Training and Professional Support of Educational Personnel in Multi-Island Situations

John Weeks

Commonwealth Secretariat

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Preface

Many small states are multi-island or archipelago countries; 38 out of 79 countries with a population of below 1.5 million in 1990. Serving the educational needs of scattered island communities and providing support for teachers and administrators who work in isolated situations has received relatively little attention internationally. And yet for countries such as The Bahamas, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Maldives, Kiribati and Tonga, the circumstances of geography give rise to a set of administrative and professional challenges which are common to the archipelago countries of the Commonwealth. It is these issues which are the focus for this short but practical volume in the Challenge of Scale series.

Particular emphasis is placed in John Weeks' study on the personal situation of those who serve education in remote locations. Only by understanding the specific circumstances of individuals can realistic strategies be defined to meet their professional needs. Brief examples cited from Commonwealth countries suggest that there is a growing body of theory and practice which deserves wider circulation amongst those in ministries and educational institutions who have to grapple with the practical problems of serving island communities on a day to day basis. This volume is a useful start in that direction.

Education Department
Human Resource Development Division
Commonwealth Secretariat
1994

The author

John Weeks has had wide experience in the service of education in the Commonwealth, especially in the South Pacific, and with Commonwealth and international agencies over a 40 year period. He recently retired as Executive Director of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration (CCEA) and has been elected a fellow of CCEA. An Honorary Fellow of the University of New England in Australia he maintains a strong interest in contemporary educational issues as a consultant. He describes himself as an educator with a firm belief in people.

Introduction

There is an old song which begins 'Have you ever been lonely, have you ever been blue ...?' It really sends out a message to everyone who works with people - education officers, advisers, heads, teachers and others - in isolated conditions of service. Such situations, where communications are difficult and professional contacts rare, often leave people feeling alone, with a sense of being forgotten. If we have never experienced such conditions of service, it is not easy to appreciate the need for continuing professional support and to be empathetic to signals for help.

It is not easy either, once the signals have been understood, to decide on ways and means to help those who feel isolated. Do we throw a lifeline or a buoy, charter a helicopter, send a memorandum or make reassuring noises over the phone - if there is one? Or do we think, 'Oh, they'll sink or swim! I've too much on my plate to give time to those who can't cope'? How many have to sink before we realise that such losses in people cannot go on and that it is better to teach everyone to swim before sending them off to those isolated places?

In these few pages we try to give some suggestions on life-saving techniques: ways in which ministries, government departments and administrators have responded to cries for help and techniques also from a variety of other sources.

Let's explore this perennial problem together just for a few brief

moments. If we manage to find ways to save a few people from sinking into isolation, then it will have been a worthwhile exercise.

It is people who get things done, so it is essential to know how to bring out the best in people, to understand their aspirations and expectations and also make sure that they understand ours. People from different countries may be different in their behaviour, their customs and their social patterns; but essentially the human problems they face are remarkably similar. People everywhere have similar hopes and anxieties, need sustaining and encouragement. Our concern, therefore, is to see how, together, we can best assist people to feel confident and competent in isolated work environments. Remember, isolation can be anywhere: in large urban areas even, as well as remote islands in archipelagos. So let's see if we can provide collegial support for all who feel isolated within systems.

The Challenge

In 1987 a meeting organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat took place in Fiji of invited senior education officials from ministries of education; administrators from institutions of further education; and participants from the Australian National University, the University of the South Pacific, the University of the West Indies, Unesco in the Pacific, the South Pacific Commission and the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration.

The topic for discussion was: The supply, training and professional support of educational personnel in multi-island situations.

The meeting concentrated on archipelago countries. Multi-island countries vary greatly in size, population spread, resources and in stages of development. The table on pages 4 and 5 demonstrates that diversity. The details of the education system of the Pacific islands nation of Kiribati which can be found on pages 6 and 7, provide a dramatic example of the numbers and distances involved in one such multi-island state.

Out of the meeting came a number of practical recommendations. The one that concerns us was the production of a directory of innovative practice developed nationally and regionally in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and the South Pacific in respect of the supply, training and support of educational personnel in multi-island states.

The project moved ahead with the blessing of the Tenth

Multi-island countries in the Commonwealth
(with a population below 1.5 million)

Country	*Political Status*
A T L A N T I C	
Falkland Islands	British Dependent Territory
St Helena and Dependencies	British Dependent Territory
C A R I B B E A N	
Antigua and Barbuda	Independent State
Bahamas	Independent State
Bermuda	British Dependent Territory
British Virgin Is.	British Dependent Territory
Cayman Is.	British Dependent Territory
Grenada	Independent State
St Kitts and Nevis	Independent State
St Vincent and The Grenadines	Independent State
Trinidad and Tobago	Independent State
Turks and Caicos	British Dependent Territory
I N D I A N O C E A N	
Cocos Is	Australian External Territory
Maldives	Independent State
Mauritius	Independent State
Seychelles	Independent State
M E D I T E R R A N E A N	
Malta	Independent State
S O U T H P A C I F I C	
Cook Is	Self Governing in association with New Zealand
Kiribati	Independent State
Pitcairn Is	British Dependent Territory
Solomon Is	Independent State
Tokelau	New Zealand Territory Overseas
Tonga	Independent State
Tuvalu	Independent State
Vanuatu	Independent State
Western Samoa	Independent State

* Includes groups of islands ** Excluding pre-primary

Pop.	*No. of Inhabited Islands*	*School Population*	*No. of ** Schools*
1900	2	360	n.a.
8000	3	n.a.	n.a.
83,000	2	15,700	46
259,000	30	59,000	226
56,000	20	10,100	36
13,000	16	3400	n.a.
23,000	3	4400	n.a.
91,000	3	27,500	76
39,000	2	12,000	39
108,000	7	38,000	83
1,249,000	2	280,000	560
8,000	6	2100	
620	2	n.a.	n.a.
221,000	202	42,531	200 approx incl trad. schools
1,083,000	2	215,000	384
67,000	21*	18,500	30
345,000	3	65,400	190
18,000	15	4500	38
71,000	23	16,200	121
65	1	n.a.	1 seconded teacher
326,000	23*	46200	443
1600	3	600	3
100,000	36	30,500	142
9,000	8	1700	10
156,000	33*	25,000	341
168,000	4	52,000	152

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat; Unesco and national plans

Kiribati

Population	71,000
Inhabited islands	23
Distance between eastern and western extremities	2,000 miles
No. of primary schools	95
No. of students in all education institutions	19,213
Range of primary school size	867 to 5
Average primary school size	160
Overall pupil teacher ratio	29:1
No. primary teachers	545
Trained teachers	468
No. of primary schools on Tarawa Atoll (No other islands has more than nine schools)	22
No. of islands with less than 10 teachers	5

The Line Islands

Kiritimati

No. of primary schools	3
No of students	603
No. of teachers	18

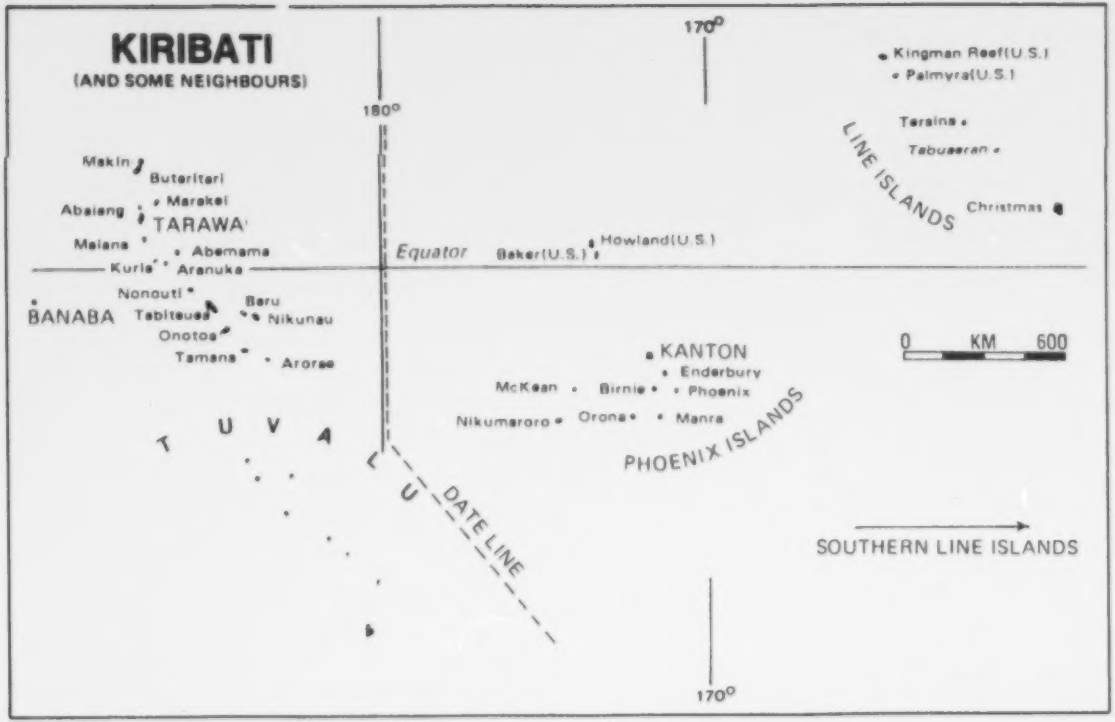
Tabuaeran

No. of primary schools	2
No. of students	288
No. of teachers	9

Teraina

No. of primary schools	1
No. of students	254
No. of teachers	5

Source: Digest of Education Statistics 1992, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Republic of Kiribati


KIRIBATI
(AND SOME NEIGHBOURS)
180°
170°
Kingman Reef(U.S.)
Palmyra(U.S.)
Teraina
Tabuaeran
LINE ISLANDS
Christmas
Makin
Butaritari
Marakei
Abaiang
TARAWA
Malana
Abemama
Kuria
Aranuka
Equator
Baker(U.S.)
Howland(U.S.)
Nonouti
BANABA
Tabiteuea
Beru
Nikunau
Onotoa
Tamana
Arorae
KANTON
Enderbury
McKean
Birnie
Phoenix
Nikumaroro
Orona
Manra
PHOENIX ISLANDS
0 KM 600
T U V A L U
DATE LINE
SOUTHERN LINE ISLANDS
170°

Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers in Kenya, also in 1987, the topic being modified to a Commonwealth directory of innovative practices for the supply, training and support of educational personnel in isolated situations.

Questionnaires were sent to a sample of countries in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and South Pacific. In spite of administrators being already heavily burdened, the replies eventually came in. Innovative? Yes, some. Concern for the problem? Yes, others. But it was obvious that many programmes had not been able to tackle isolation as a special problem and some did not consider it to be a problem at all.

Therefore it seemed that rather than a directory it would be helpful to look not only at those innovative practices, of which there were many, but also to explore the vital issue of people, responsibilities and preparation, while looking at other practices which offer support to the isolated .

We would use case studies to highlight the issues and leave some questions to be answered by the reader.

From the questionnaires it was obvious that attitudes to people and their needs had to be the beginning of salvation.

Is it sink or swim or are there lifelines for the isolated?

Who throws the lifeline?
Who is responsible?

Is the answer 'They ought to...' or 'We ought to...?

Two Case Studies: Sink or Swim?

Although we can't always go out and see every situation for ourselves we can listen and learn from what we hear.

It is also possible to catch a glimpse of 'life out there' through case studies. These are factual accounts - 'slices of life', if you like - which enable us to focus our minds on particular problems, appreciate the complexities of human relations and greatly increase our understanding of ourselves and our wisdom in dealing with people and their hopes, fears, anxieties and needs.

Let me emphasise that these case studies are real situations: they actually happened and no doubt hundreds of similar cases go unrecorded every day.

A The Multarchos

The people

Mr Fiko Landas

Newly-appointed Headmaster of Naroni School, one of the government's newly-established junior secondary schools. Recently returned from the Southern Perspectives University with a B.Ed.degree. Has one year's previous teaching experience.

Mrs Nola Pera
Regional Education Officer (REO) of ROFUA district - one of the 12 local government districts (previously four administrative districts) recently established in accordance with government's decentralisation policy.

Mr James Sweek
Director of Secondary Education. Has only one young and inexperienced assistant (a teacher recently returned from an overseas course - placed with the Director because there is some dispute as to which department should have him). There is one overseas Science Adviser.

The setting: The Multarchos Islands

Land area
14,500 sq. km.; 70 small islands strung out in L-shaped formation over a wide area of ocean - 12 of the larger islands inhabited.

Population
200,000 concentrated on the main islands; 90 per cent of the people are Multarchosi with settlers from other countries in the region and Europeans making up the rest of the population.

Capital
UNOS, with a population of 25,000; government, business and commercial centre.

Communications
Good air links between two main towns, Unos and Secos, which are on different islands; small airfields on the larger islands. Infrequent and unreliable shipping facilities with poor inter-island services. Very few good roads; mostly rough and difficult terrain. Excellent telecommunications internationally from the two main towns - most larger islands linked by telephone/radio-telephone.

Government
Independent republic for nine years; two party parliamentary system with one chamber. A policy of decentralisation ('power to the

people') has led to the establishment of 12 local government regions in place of the previous four administrative districts; not sufficient resources available for this development but political pressures and an imminent general election have given it a high priority.

Languages
A number of local languages with Langdoc as the national language; English the main medium of instruction in secondary schools.

Schools
Education is not compulsory but is free in primary; fees in secondary; 90 per cent of primary aged children in school; 300 primary schools with 27,800 pupils; 25 per cent of primary pupils go on to secondary; selection examination taken in Year 6.

Teachers
1,000 primary teachers; 40 per cent trained; all local. 165 secondary teachers; 90 per cent from overseas. Great problems in staffing secondary schools - high turnover of aid personnel and high loss rate of local overseas-trained teachers, reluctance of locals to teach outside UNOS, problems in attracting good local applicants into the teaching service, lack of continuity and stability.

Expenditure
28 per cent of government recurrent budget spent on education; 70 per cent on primary, 22 per cent on secondary (and rising), 6 per cent on tertiary, 2 per cent on non-formal. Salaries account for over 74 per cent of budget. In spite of the large sums spent there is a great lack of resources in schools; very limited supervisory services for primary; decentralisation has taken most of former advisers as REOs; no secondary advisers.

The case

Correspondence between Mr Fiko Landas, Mrs Nola Pera and Mr James Sweek illustrates the problems faced by Mr Landas when he is posted to a fairly remote newly-established government secondary school on completion of his B.Ed. degree at the regional university.

Letter 1

5 April 1986

Dear Nola,
Please excuse me writing in this informal way instead of through 'official channels'. I'm presuming on our long friendship over the years to ask for your help in my present difficult situation.

As you know, I completed my degree at SPU last year and returned to the Multarchos to find myself posted as Headmaster of this new government secondary school: Naroni Junior Secondary School, in Rofua district. You may remember that before I was sent to SPU in 1983 I was assured that I would be posted to a school in Unos on my return so that I could continue my studies. That would also have meant that Nita, my wife, would have been able to continue her teaching and the children's education would not have been interrupted.

But what happened on my return? I was posted to Naroni School without any consultation or preparation and certainly little previous teaching experience. Because government was committed to the opening of so many new secondary schools in 1986, inexperienced people like myself are sent to launch these schools with no warning and no training.

Can you imagine, Nola, how I felt when I arrived here? Alone, because Nita and the children had to be left behind (no accommodation, no primary school near), not speaking the local language (I am from Mantua), finding that the conversion of the primary school building for secondary use had not been completed (in fact it had hardly started) and within two days I found myself having to cope with the only other member of staff to arrive, an inexperienced overseas teacher - and on top of all that 35 students to be looked after 24 hours a day. There are no proper boarding facilities, food is a problem and so far I am still waiting for books, equipment and other vital supplies. And when I write (the nearest phone is five miles away in the village) all I get is - SILENCE.

Of course, I know the government didn't want to lose face politically by postponing the opening of the schools, so we in the field

are given an impossible task and I know that when things go wrong, as I fear they will, we shall have to take the blame!

We are doing our best but up till now nobody has been near the school to give advice or encouragement - even a visit by somebody to assess our situation would have been a sign of interest. We are desperate for this.

It's a case of 'sink or swim' and I am afraid I'm sinking fast! Could you please, Nola, get over to the island - just that would boost my morale.

I realise that you, too, have a difficult job but with my wife and children back in Unos, the isolation of Naroni and the problem of trying to fight against so many other difficulties, I feel so depressed and completely abandoned.

Sorry to sound so down but you're my one hope as nobody else seems to worry about me. Even writing this to you has helped me to share my burdens.

With good wishes and hoping to hear from you soon,

Sincerely,

Fiko

Letter 2

10 May 1986

Dear Fiko,

Thank you for your letter. Sorry to have taken so long to reply. There seems so much to do in the region and with only one other REO we are just not able to cope with the increasing responsibilities put on to us.

Of course, I don't mind an old friend like you writing informally. I'm sorry to hear of all your difficulties at Naroni - we have expected something like that because of the sudden decision to open all those new secondary schools with our very limited resources and no time for proper planning.

What can I say? Of course I want to help but as you know there are only two of us and we have been flat out administering the office and the needs of all our schools in the first term of the school year - new heads, problems of housing, equipment, etc. So much of our time has to be spent on paperwork.

You say it was agreed that after SPU you would be posted to Unos - but you must also understand that with our limited resources and the need to fill sudden gaps it's just not possible to make any promises about postings at the end of three years. So, while I sympathise, it's something that we, in our small islands, just have to accept - as a challenge, perhaps?

I can, however, assure you that books and other supplies have been ordered and should be with you soon - as long as the publishers send everything by air.

Staffing is a problem and I can't promise that any quick improvement can be made. In the meantime you two will have to continue to do your best and try to cover as many subjects as possible for the Year 7 class enrolled this year. I really would like to visit the school but we are still awaiting a reply from HQ to our request for transport. Another problem is that because our accommodation is not yet ready for us we can't move to Rofua. We're still in Secos and have to try to work from here.

You will, I hope, be getting a visit soon from the Director,

Secondary and the Science Adviser. They are doing their best to sort out the problems that have arisen. At the next Principals' Association meeting you should seek their advice and see if a training programme could be set up in association with the Ministry and the World Office of Education (WOE) project.

I am sending you two cartons of books received from the Ranfurly Library. Of course, they won't solve everything but will be of some use, I hope.

I heard that Nita and the children are well but, of course, missing you very much. We'll all have to get together soon for a chat to see what we can do to improve things.

In the meantime, I have rung James Sweek. He was away overseas on a two week course on 'Training Programmes for Effective Education'. His secretary said he'll get in touch with me as soon as he gets back. What a pity he doesn't have more staff to help him.

Keep smiling, Fiko. Things are never as bad as they seem. We'll be in touch.

With all good wishes

Nola

Phone message (taken by secretary - 15 May 1986)

To: REO, Rofua
From: Director, Secondary

The Director was sorry he could not speak to you - he had forgotten that you had been sent off suddenly to New Zealand for that week's educational administration conference.

He realises the problems faced by Mr Landas but says that Mr Landas must himself realise that there are seven other heads of new schools with problems (as well as those in the established schools) and that there is a need for everybody to work harder to overcome these teething troubles that happen with all new projects. He agrees with you that the Principals' Association should be able to provide some solutions.

The Director said he would have liked to visit all the new schools early on but with only one assistant and now having to stand in for the Director-General who is often away supervising building reconstruction of schools damaged in the cyclone, he can't leave the Ministry.

He looks forward to discussions with the Principals and hopes they will be useful. Until then he hopes Mr Landas will make every effort to manage.

L.O.

B An unexpected visitor

The people

Mr Fodutsi
Head of Esalo Secondary School

Mr Wenl
Class Teacher at Esalo School

Mr Trope
Secondary School Inspector

School Secretary

The case

The head of Esalo Secondary School, Mr Fodutsi, and his staff have decided to try out a new scheme in the school. They plan one day a week, Thursday, as a free activities day. This is a day when pupils will not have formal lessons but will participate in non-formal activities, such as school societies, sports, drama, craft, films, etc. Thursday has been chosen because the Pupils' Council specially asked for it.

On the first Thursday Mr Fodutsi took assembly in the school hall and then saw the pupils off to their various activities which were to be supervised by staff members. Everybody was excited over this departure from the usual routine and the head hoped that he and the staff had made the right decision.

Towards the end of the morning a car draws up outside the school. A serious looking man carrying a brief-case gets out and enters the school. He goes straight to the headmaster's office and finding him absent sits down to wait.

After a few minutes the school secretary comes in and greets the visitor, 'Welcome Mr Trope, I'll call the head at once. This is our first free activities day and Mr Fodutsi is somewhere about the school checking on all the various groups'.

Some minutes pass and there is still no sign of the head. Mr Trope, growing impatient, decides to act by himself. He looks at the time-table in the office and finds the name of Mr Wenl, the teacher he wishes to inspect, and the number of his classroom. He steps outside and sees a pupil running along the corridor. Mr Trope stops the boy and asks him the way to the classroom he wants. Of course, Mr Wenl is not there; he is, in fact, taking a judo class in the school hall. Another boy is sent to summon him.

Mr Wenl comes rushing up but before he could say anything the inspector says 'I came here today to inspect you because I have to send a report to the Director as soon as possible'.

'Oh dear' sighed the now worried Mr Wenl. 'I'm afraid we don't have any formal lessons today. It's our first free activity day and pupils aren't attending classes. They're all taking part in special activities like society meetings and sports and handicrafts.'

'I didn't know anything about this free activity day and I want to inspect your lessons. I can't come again this month and the report for your promotion must be sent at once. Please call your pupils to the classroom.' Mr Trope was unsmiling.

Mr Wenl hastens out of the classroom and immediately meets the head coming in the opposite direction. He quickly relates his conversation with Mr Trope.

'Don't look so worried, my dear chap!' the head reassures the anxious young Mr Wenl. 'You just go back to that judo group in the hall and I'll deal with Mr Trope.' And Mr Fodutsi strides into the classroom, hand outstretched.

'Hallo, Mr Trope. I'm glad to see you here. Mr Wenl's just told me that you want to inspect him. I'm sorry, but I'm afraid that's not possible today. Perhaps you'd like to come along to my room and I'll explain the whole matter.'

Mr Trope frowns unresponsively and follows the head.

The message

These cases make, I think, fascinating reading, because people were involved and from their behaviour we can learn about their needs and think about the type of education system they have to work in. You, I am sure, will have been reacting as you read and making judgements and decisions about what you would have done in such circumstances.

From experience, I have found the first reaction to be 'That could never happen in our system!' But they have happened in real life. Are we sure that our situation prepares sensitive, understanding, supportive people who would never react in such ways: that our people are confident professionals able to cope in similar circumstances? What were your reactions?

Cases stimulate different reactions from different people. At this stage, I'll just make a few suggestions following on from those cases but I shall not try to give 'the answer', because there is never one set answer to be marked 'right' or 'wrong'.

The cases were used to highlight the problem faced by people in schools and the ways in which these were dealt with. Did you have the feeling that people mattered in those cases? Were people's sensitivities respected, their problems appreciated? Was there a temptation to divide people into 'good' or 'bad', 'right' or 'wrong'? Is it as simple as that? Was there a need for everyone concerned to learn more about each other's hopes, fears, pressures? Were all the people in the cases confident, secure and professionally assured? What caused people to act as they did?

Did the events and the reactions of the characters convey any sense of a situation where there had been:

- careful selection of people for particular jobs
- sound pre-service preparation
- provision of relevant in-service programmes for all concerned
- caring, concerned, non-threatening, informed, professional support?

You may say that the second case does not really represent 'isolation'. True, but were there not signs of 'isolation', in terms of separation and lack of communication in that case? The new teacher; the inspector; the ministry; need they have been so unable to make productive contact? Are people in need of reassurance and support wherever they are, in a town or a far away island? Can they feel a sense of isolation, neglect, of not being appreciated wherever they are? If departments don't see the need to support those in physically isolated situations, do they act any differently towards people closer at hand? Is it a matter of attitude, a philosophy that people do matter, do merit respect and support? So, does it all boil down to the overall belief in people being the vital ingredient - the beginning of salvation?

The problem, then, is how to ensure that this philosophy is applied to all, even those in the most physically isolated conditions. First comes the policy or philosophy: second the will to ensure it applies to all.

Before we move on to see what is happening in various countries, let's have another look at the case studies.

What do they say to you about:

The people
Professionalism; team building; support; respect; co-operation; sensitivity; trust?

The system
Consultation; selection; preparation; morale?

Was the first case an impossible situation with no solutions? Was there no way to help? Were all those concerned so overburdened that self-preservation was the burning issue? What could be done to give a ray of hope?

Was the second a question of pressure from the top causing such behaviour? Was there a breakdown in communication?

Are they both the result of wrong attitudes at the top? How could such situations have been avoided?

Lifelines

We were grateful to all those countries which responded to the open questionnaire. Questionnaires do fall thick and fast on to long-suffering education officers' desks; to have a 95 per cent response was greatly appreciated. These responses have been combined with the initial contributions from colleagues who participated in the Suva meeting in 1987.

This section will not be an inventory of all available courses and activities in the countries concerned but a selection of practices which respond to the great need for professional support and contact.

The following information is set out as:

Policies

Selection

a) procedures - criteria

b) inducements - incentives

c) pre-service programmes

In-service programmes

Professional support

Institutional initiatives

Some points will be made generally to reflect practices in a number of countries but where it may be helpful the specific country has been named.

Policies

General

A number of countries stressed that there was no specific policy, that the same policy and process applied to everybody. For some, this was a positive statement to show that people in isolated situations were not treated any differently from others - a sign of equality of treatment for all. The problem, as we have seen, is that it is not easy to ensure that this policy produces professionally confident people for difficult assignments and that those in isolation are seen as part of the network or team.

One or two said that there was no clear policy, which led to confusion between staff development and in-service programmes for those in the service.

Specific

Positive policies with built-in safeguards to ensure implementation will be of interest to all readers.

Bahamas
Although there is no special policy for those in particular circumstances, every effort is made to post trained, experienced personnel to outer islands. Lack of trained staff and suitable accommodation causes problems.

Cook Islands
A positive policy towards isolated islands has brought about the appointment of an Education Officer whose sole responsibility is to the Northern Group of islands. A Primary Inspector has also been assigned to the Northern Group and negotiations are in hand for a separate budget for these schools. Thus, staff working in this group feel very much a part of the team with clearly defined support.

Maldive Islands
Outer islands are given special consideration. The ultimate aim is for all atolls to have their own trained teachers and education offi-

cers. Their voices are heeded and policy includes processes to build competent, confident teams.

Seychelles
All schools and teachers are treated exactly the same. No courses are held unless all island teachers have an opportunity to attend. Nobody feels left out or forgotten. Urban and rural areas have equal opportunities.

Selection

How are personnel selected for remote schools or districts? Various influences prevail including the political; but fitting round pegs into round holes is essential if we want reasonably satisfied, committed, contented staff mentors. Outer islands are still used as 'punishment' postings in some countries with the sad results predictable.

a) Procedures - criteria

Most countries tried to select suitable staff for particular responsibilities but a few followed normal recruiting procedures used by the Public Service Commission/Teaching Service Commission. Lack of sufficient trained staff meant that even with the best of intentions some appointments were made of those not ideally suited to the special conditions they had to face. This meant that support services had an even more important role to play.

Bahamas
Ideally, married couples with the necessary training and experience were preferred especially as this reduced potential accommodation problems. Secondary teachers had to be able to offer two or three subjects because of limited staff in small schools.

Cook Islands
Two-year contracts for secondary principals and deputies are being tried out. High quality staff are approached to take up these positions.

Kiribati
Staff have to be qualified for responsibilities and be able to teach at the required level and to fit in with the community. Selection is made by the ministry according to the needs of the particular island and its community. Normally, where possible, teachers are posted to their own islands.

Maldive Islands
The selection is made from atoll candidates. Those trained for atolls serve in their own islands. If they have to go to another atoll they serve one year only before returning home. Those who have stayed in the capital for a long period are not invited or accepted!

Seychelles
Vacancies are advertised throughout schools. Preferably single teachers without children are selected.

Tonga
Endeavours are made to build strong supportive teams in isolated areas: teacher, nurse, policeman, clerk, etc. to provide complementary talents for local development. This emphasis on team building and team responsibilities minimises individual isolation and makes full use of all available talents.

b) Inducements-incentives

With the best will in the world, even committed people respond to a carrot or two rather than the stick. It is not always easy to provide inducements when finances are low but we should remember that money is only one way. A 'thank you' by word or letter does let people know that their efforts are noted and recognised as making an important contribution to the national effort. Don't wait until good women and men retire before you thank them! We record only carrots here.

Bahamas
Provides free housing, transport from the main island to take up a new appointment and hardship allowances for those serving in remote areas with limited amenities.

Kiribati
Because as far as possible staff work on their own islands, they can be with their families and live at home. Life on outer islands is cheaper and they can work their own land in any spare time.

Maldive Islands
Teachers are much respected and cared for by the community - salary scales are higher for teachers than other civil service posts. Special allowances and food allowance for heads and teachers who serve on islands other than their own are provided with added bonuses after the bond period. This is not the case for other civil service posts. Regular intensive courses are much in demand and well subscribed. Furnished accommodation and housekeeping services are provided for heads. Teachers with high leadership qualities are appointed assistant heads and sent on special two-year tailor-made courses. Atoll education centres (model schools) have been established in every province (19) as decentralised resource centres. Ministers visit atolls frequently - face-to-face once a year during vacation workshops. There are end of year workshop/seminars and visits by senior officials.

Seychelles
The state bears the extra costs involved to keep outer island conditions in line with the main island with a policy of inducement to attract and keep qualified personnel on outer islands. Every effort is made to ensure that living conditions are on a par with those on the main island. Disturbance allowances are paid on transfer to outer islands and on return. There is also a monthly inducement allowance depending on conditions. The less populated and attractive the location the higher the allowance. Added to these inducements there is free accommodation and free transport by boat every holiday.

Tonga
Allowances for rural and remote area teachers; encouragement and assistance to take study courses through regional university extension courses; extra increments for passing; three years' island service for all teachers - so no favoured few!

Vanuatu/Western Samoa
There are special allowances for those in remote island, one or two teacher schools.

c) Pre-service programmes

Hardly any country made special provisions in this area for those going to serve in isolated conditions. This is perhaps because before completion of teacher-education programmes, most teachers do not know where they are likely to be posted. Unexpected staff changes can make it difficult for postings to be arranged well in advance but it is something to be considered. Orientation programmes for those going to outer islands are few and far between. Is there a weakness here?

Bahamas
There are orientation programmes on living and working in outer islands and small communities. These are part of pre-service programmes.

Maldives Islands
There are specially designed training programmes for those going to atolls. Practice teaching is done in the outer islands. Heads are given a special tailor-made two-year course overseas covering advanced teacher training, educational administration and community leadership.

In-service training programmes

Once launched into orbit educational personnel still need the occasional 'booster rocket', applied in a friendly manner, of course. How often do we think 'Let's give them an in-service workshop'; how frequently do we see the ritual annual workshop/seminar/conference taking place with outside consultants and little follow up? The experience can fade quickly with little practical results.

How often do we ask 'What is needed to support the professional development of our isolated educational administrators?'

There are a number of issues which have to be considered when planning an in-service workshop for those in isolated situations. Should it be centralised or decentralised, should you bring them in or go out to them? Does it have to be either/or?

Here are a few pros and cons. They do not cover every aspect. You, from your own experience, will no doubt be able to add many other factors.

Centralised courses

For

- key people can be brought togther
- contact with HQ staff provides a good communication opportunity
- provides initial information to be followed up in districts
- wide range of resources available
- new policies and ideas can be easily explained to those responsible for implementing them
- good mixed group for interaction and discussion
- away from distractions of regional office
- opportunities for social activities
- raises the vision of participants beyond local horizons.

Against

- transport problems
- regions left without staff
- cost of transport and accommodation
- away from the 'real' situation
- problems of relating information to practice
- temptation to cover too much to ensure efficient use of funds
- too much, too thinly spread and easily forgotten
- often only one person per school or district with no support on return
- too many social distractions.

Decentralised

For

- more people can come from each school or region
- good for team building
- costs lower; mainly for course organisers
- can use local people as staff - encourages confidence
- good to follow up 'broad brush' of centralised course with more in-depth explanation
- in a 'working' situation
- information relates directly to practice
- easier to ensure 'isolated' involved
- ensures HQ people know local situation
- could be school-based, giving emphasis to institutional professional development
- smaller numbers allows individual needs to be catered for.

Against

- used on its own could take a long time to reach all in need
- not easy to provide all necessary resources
- limited view of national situation
- no interaction across districts
- distractions caused by everyday work demands.

Often many resources and programmes are available for in-service training, especially where you have regional institutions particularly concerned with this role. Co-operation to make good use of available resources saves unnecessary labour in individual departments. Why not seek the active involvement of other departments and national and regional universities and organisations in planning, designing and delivering training programmes?

The following are a few examples of attempts at such co-operation:

Bahamas

Personnel in isolated sectors are given the opportunity to participate in the National Education Conference, summer workshops and

subject workshops throughout the year. Teachers are encouraged to attend a two or three week workshop on the main island.

Cook Islands
To ensure that all outer island staff have a chance to participate in courses, schools are closed from six to eight weeks. All teachers are brought to the main in-service centre providing a group feeling of integration in the network.

Kiribati
Courses are held in the outer islands so that all can participate in one or two-week courses. Full use is also made of the extension, outreach courses available from the University of the South Pacific, which are extremely popular.

Maldive Islands
There is a regular in-service programme, one every year for everybody where possible; all have a turn. A study is being carried out to link in-service courses completed by staff to upgrading of salary. Full-time one-year upgrading courses are available in various subject areas. These content courses have been identified as an area of critical need especially for outer island teachers.

Seychelles
All costs are paid for outer island personnel to travel to the main island for in-service courses. This avoids any feeling of isolation or neglect. Courses are sometimes held on outer islands.

Solomon Islands
There is a Diploma in Educational Administration for senior officers unable to be released for full-time study. This was developed by the Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific and specially designed for the Solomons. It was the result of a request by the ministry for IOE to provide a course which would suit local needs and which could be provided in the Solomons with two residential workshops and other material provided by correspondence. It was designed jointly by IOE and the ministry and was subsequently evaluated, modified and made available.

Professional support

In-service training is only one form of professional support. Staff who may perhaps be lucky to attend one in-service course a year do need to feel a part of the system.

> How to bring about a feeling of
> US and OURS
> instead of
> ME and MINE versus THEM and THEIRS

Even modest gestures can give this support: replying to letters; returning 'phone calls; sending supplies on time; putting ourselves in their shoes and understanding problems, being contactable and sympathetic. Such responses cost nothing except time.

The following examples are more formal ways of providing that feeling of security.

Bahamas

Islands are divided into small districts each with an education officer who gives advisory supervision and support. Officers from Central Office visit outer islands to advise. They give their time. A pilot distance education programme is being tried for two to three years. Teachers from four of the islands are taking upgrading courses in core subjects, thus adding to their knowledge and expertise and gaining in confidence.

Cook Islands

There is a 'task force' for outer island secondary schools. An Education Officer, an inspector and two teachers with specific skills spend two-to-three months on the outer islands working with teachers during and after school on planning, methodology, administration and organisation, use of scarce resources, preparation of teaching aids and other areas specifically requested.

Kiribati

Regular visits from education officers and teachers and college staff give outer island personnel professional backup. Teachers are

encouraged to take University of the South Pacific extension courses and receive full costs. Those who prove their ability and perseverance through USP courses are awarded scholarships. Those who are successful have no problem in gaining promotion. This extension network gives equal opportunity to everybody.

Maldives

Teacher educators are placed in 'cluster schools' within Atoll Education Centres to give full support services to heads and teachers. There are radio programmes for teachers once a week on 'Teachers' World'. This facility is provided by many countries, but the problem is providing stimulating material at a time when teachers can listen in a relaxed atmosphere. A professional teachers' journal keeps teachers up-to-date. Comments and views are invited and responded to in the following issue. Staff write about innovative practices practised in their schools.

Seychelles

Follows its philosophy of equality of opportunity for all. The same advisory services and other professional support facilities have to be provided to all staff wherever they are. There is no sense of isolation, of being off the main network.

Vanuatu

An advisory service covers all the islands and provides good professional support. The aim is to build expertise and confidence in heads of schools who are encouraged and helped to be responsible for staff development. Teachers' Centres also help to strengthen the network although these have had varying success.

Finally, here is one experienced trainer's view of measures which can be taken to give systematic professional support. It is a checklist based on working with school principals but has wider applicability.

Trainer's checklist

Induction courses

a) They should not be conferences but workshops with everybody fully involved.

b) Consult participants to allow for individual needs.
c) Ensure content is based on real issues.
d) Teach interactive skills and shared problem-solving to encourage co-operation: isolation hinders co-operation.
e) Develop: professional skills; critical thinking; problem-solving skills.
f) Provide, where possible, a resource library (in a centrally located school?) to help people to help themselves.

Communication and support

g) Encourage the building of collegial group networks supported by a convenor, a facilitator.
h) Encourage and reward independence.
i) Use telephone contact, where possible, for the very isolated - the personal touch.

Avoiding 'them' and 'us'

j) Invite administrators to experience real situations.
k) Work to solve real crises from real situations by co-operation.
l) Focus on, say, three priorities in a given time: too much too quickly leads to confusion and 'giving up'.
m) Provide opportunities for 'them' and 'us' to encourage inter-dependence.

Conclusions

One thing does seem clear.

> We need in-service programmes to support people at the centre and on the periphery, at home and away.

One other conclusion:

> Once a year is not enough.
> A planned, progressive programme organised by a training team is essential.

Institutional initiatives

Regional institutions such as universities, colleges, Unesco, the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration, provide a wide range of co-operative services and act as resource co-ordinators. Some interesting co-operative initiatives have been taken and here are a few examples: all provide possibilities for everybody to be involved and bring isolated personnel into a strong, supportive educational network.

University of the West Indies

UWI has campuses in three Caribbean countries (Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago). It is one of two regional universities still flourishing: the other is the University of the South Pacific. Some of the supportive work done by UWI and associate agencies are of interest:

UWI Office of University Services
This provides an important service in the region in co-ordinating support programmes with ministries, departments, regional institutions and agencies and other regional institutions. This ensures a co-operative use of resources and avoids duplication of effort.

School of Education
Leadership programmes are being developed for specialist areas in various school systems of the East Caribbean related intimately to local problems. An example of this is a B.Ed. programme which produces people confident in their ability and with a commitment to local co-operative endeavours. There has also been a Distance Teaching Experiment (UWIDITE) which has had as part of its focus, the networking of professional educators across the Caribbean.

University of the South Pacific

Through its Institute of Education USP provides a focal point for education personnel in the region from the 12 countries it serves. Through its research, consultancies, workshops and exchange pro-

grammes for administrators it provides professional support services and responds practically and quickly to particular requests. In this way no country need feel isolated and without links to advisory support. A wide range of practical qualifications are available at various levels: pre-school, reading techniques, evaluation, librarianship, educational administration, curriculum development - all this through a progression of units from certificate to diploma and on to degree. All this is available through extension services to the most isolated people in the system. USP's extension services, satellite communication network and centres in all countries provides strong support for all its far-flung clients!

Unesco (Pacific)

Unesco provides support for a variety of programmes aimed at making Pacific institutions professionally strong and independent:

- vocational curriculum development
- educational testing and assessment through the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (a regional body based in Fiji)
- management and administration training for inspectors and heads
- small-scale educational publishing scheme.

The examples show clearly how much can be gained by sharing ideas and projects for mutual benefit.

Developing Team Effectiveness

The problems of selection, preparation and support for educational personnel in isolated situations are not confined to any one country or group of countries; they are universal and there are no easy answers.

It is helpful at this point to look at a number of questions which may prompt discussion.

How can we make people feel important? How can we show that we understand them, respect them, support them, encourage them?

Is it possible to change long-held attitudes? Nothing can be achieved until the need to support people in their working environment is an accepted philosophy of all concerned with people. A humanist educator, Camille Cotes, says: 'First develop your own mind. Who you are and how you think affects the organisation you help to manage'.

What expectations do we have of people? It is necessary to have realistic expectations of people's ability; not place them in work situations which are beyond their capabilities.

What professional preparation can we offer? People need to be prepared, trained, given the necessary experience to help them perform well; a 'sink or swim' philosophy is wasteful of human talent.

What resources do people need? Even with the right skills and

the right attitudes the job will fail without proper resources.

How do we give people the sense of being team members, part of a strong collegial network? Working together as a team concentrates all resources on the task.

Do we hold people back because we are afraid they may do better than we can? Jealousy often prevents our supporting, praising others. A team pools resources - it does not waste available talent in personal jealousies and competition.

Do we praise enough? We tend to be quick to criticise but slow to applaud a good job well done. To receive thanks and recognition raises morale.

How do we raise morale? It is a hard-to-define feeling, but so important for all of us - to believe in and feel confident about what we are doing. Let's build, not destroy.

Analysing team effectiveness

Now have a go at analysing your school, district, region, department with the team checklist on the opposite page. I'm not sure who made it but it could be revealing and helpful.

Analyse your team by rating it on a scale from 1 to 7 (7 being what you would consider to be ideal) for each of the dimensions indicated. Then (with the rest of the team) discuss each dimension in depth, paying particular attention to those for which the average rating is below 5 or for which the range of individual ratings is particularly wide. Formulate some ideas as to why these perceptions exist. The 'whys' are likely to be quite different for different dimensions.

Degree of mutual trust			
High suspicion	1	7	High trust
Degree of mutual support			
'Every man for himself'	1	7	Genuine concern for each other
Communications			
Guarded, cautious	1	7	Open, authentic
Team objectives			
Not understood by team	1	7	Clearly understood by team
Team is negative toward objectives	1	7	Team is committed to objectives
Handling conflicts within team			
We deny, avoid or suppress conflicts	1	7	We confront conflicts and 'work them through'
Utilisation of member resources			
Our abilities, knowledge and experience are not utilised by the team	1	7	Our abilities, knowledge and experience are fully utilised by the team
Control methods			
Control is imposed on us	1	7	We control ourselves
Organisational environment			
Restrictive, pressure toward conformity	1	7	Free, supportive, respect for individual differences

Some Conclusions

Education for human resource development

The education service is only one component in human resource development. There is a need, where possible, to encourage a team approach involving teacher, nurse, extension worker, policeman, administrator. All have roles to play in a co-operative effort. We need to encourage inter-dependence, co-operation not confrontation.

Collective skills and ingenuity can make the most of available resources.

If ingenuity, flexibility and adaptability are the necessary watchwords for human resource development in small states, these qualities must be reflected in all those who serve the islands, from the minister, director, education officer to the teachers.

There needs to be a designated training programme with a responsible person to ensure implementation.

Problems and challenges

There are issues over which education has no control, for example, a lack of vision beyond short term political needs can be a major impediment to rational, purposeful education development.

There are other issues over which education has some control, for example, the way in which the system functions and the behaviour

of those who manage it and work in it - people's attitudes and personalities.

There are physical and financial challenges, for example, transport, delivery of materials; communications; costs of servicing scattered education units; special inducements for good, experienced teachers to serve in isolated communities.

There are management challenges, for example, the need for multi-purpose educational administrators; too few staff for supervision and advisory services; too much paperwork obstructing work with people; the need for leadership and management training programmes for heads, teachers and administrators; clearly defined criteria for selection; soundly based preparation; clear lines of communication from the centre to the most isolated people and units.

The personal challenges include paying careful attention to training and orientation programmes to develop understanding between community and educational personnel; appreciation of difficulties faced by staff in isolated areas; attention to living conditions; opportunities for personal and professional development.

Recruitment, posting and careers

Politics and practice should encourage commitment; for effective recruitment and posting policies.

Staff should be made to feel part of the national network; equal opportunities for training and promotion; interchange of ministry and regional staff.

Training and support services

Teachers' Colleges; importance of planned, progressive, relevant programmes; staff with experience in rural schools; co-operation between colleges and region, with schools, district education officers, island communities, etc; good and close contact with ministry-policy making, innovation and change.

Ministries of Education are the focal point for links with regional

institutions, aid agencies, policies of outer island support services; sensitive understanding of outer island needs; careful consideration of internal and external training resources.

Regional universities can research improving cost effectiveness in the delivery of education services; new ways of providing support services to match outer island needs.

Advisory services draw on a wide range of experienced regional expertise; governments are encouraged to look to regional universities as first reference points for advisory assistance.

Information services provide accessible information in regions; collection and dissemination of material; informing countries about education and training activities in the region.

Training functions: opportunities for ministry, college staff to have attachments for research and study of particular national issues; interchange between national training institutions in the region; strengthening network.

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